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Defense bill on the table

■ Congress expected to vote in September

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — Pending a final floor vote, House and Senate conferees reached agreement on the National Defense Authorization Bill for fiscal year 2000.

A final vote on the bill, which authorizes funding for the Department of Defense, is expected after Congress returns from recess in September.

Once the authorization bill is approved, the next step is the appropriations bill that approves an actual budget to carry out the authorizations.

Significant items that will go to a vote in the House and Senate include:

- A 4.8 percent across-the board pay raise

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If the the authorization bill is approved as it stands, airmen will see a pay raise, a one time reform of the military pay tables, retirement pay reform, and more.

CSAF defines reconstitution

■ Gen. Ryan: Force may be weary, but not worn out

By Staff Sgt. Michael Dorsey

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — Although the service must take time to recover from the back-to-back taskings of Desert Fox and Operation Allied Force, the Air Force's senior leader says reconstitution does not mean standing down.

"The Air Force isn't broken. When you use a force, you have to recover it, and we're doing that," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan, referring to what he called six months of a very, very high operations tempo. His comments were made to 25 reporters during a Defense Writers' Group breakfast in Washington, D.C., last week.

"When I say recover, what I mean is that we don't task them during that period," he said in reference to units that were deployed for up to 150 days. Although on a year-to-

year basis many units are actually gone longer, General Ryan said, "We try not to exceed 120 days; about a third of the time gone is our cap."

Using Desert Storm as a basis for comparison, the chief explained that across the board, the Air Force used the same percentage of force in OAF — 35 to 40 percent.

"When you do that," General Ryan said, referring to the OAF effort, a big training backup occurs. Training, new production of your aircrews and training of your ground capabilities suffer because the new people who are coming in don't have a unit to go to.

"They're normally stuck at the base back home where we've deployed from," he said. "We have to come back and retrain those folks and integrate them into the operation."

He said those who do deploy also lose

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NEWSBYTES

New policy for officers

Beginning with the Nov. 30 lieutenant colonel promotions boards, professional military education and advanced academic degree "completion of/enrollment in" comments will be authorized on field grade (majors and lieutenant colonels) and senior grade (colonel) promotion recommendation forms.

The change, which Air Force officials say will better meet the needs of senior raters and benefit the officer, was approved at CORONA Top '99.

Officials say PME and advanced academic degrees are important whole-person factors which enhance duty performance and senior raters already consider them when assessing promotion potential. This change will now allow senior raters the flexibility to comment on these whole-person factors on the PRF.

Currently, such comments on PRFS are only appropriate to document extraordinary achievement.

Contact the local military personnel flight for more information.

Recruiter and a hero

A recruiter based in Woodbridge, Va., recently received the Airman's Medal for his heroic attempts to save a young woman's life during a car accident that occurred last spring.

Staff Sgt. Tony Williams, assigned to the 317th Recruiting Squadron, was driving home from his brother-in-law's house in Jeffersonton, Va., when he encountered the single-car accident. He and another passerby made repeated attempts to pull the driver from the car, but were driven back by the flames.

Despite their attempts, the driver later succumbed to her injuries. Sergeant Williams was treated for burns and other minor injuries stemming from his efforts.



Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week.

Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>. Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

No merit to mixed crew issue

I'm also a devout Catholic and do not even begin to understand why Lt. Ryan Berry believes his stance has merit. ...Perhaps if the lieutenant could view female officers as peers and not in a sexual context then there would be no problem here. ...I view our female airmen as peers... and have no problem serving side-by-side with them no matter how tight the confines. The lieutenant needs to accept the fact this is not an institutional problem but instead a personal problem.

Lt. Col. Michael H. McDonald
Offutt AFB, Neb.

No place for convictions

The Air Force has basically given in to pressures that it has mistreated 1st Lt. Ryan Berry and is forced to spend unnecessary money to retrain and reassign him to another base. This decision has effectively opened the biggest can of worms possible. Everyone now

knows they can dictate how, when, and with whom they work simply by voicing their own religious beliefs. ...The simple truth is mission accomplishment should not be sacrificed for anyone's religious requests. The military is not the place to use religion as an excuse to dictate one's own moral convictions.

Tech. Sgt. John Stuart
Hickam AFB, Hawaii

Don't change system

Regarding "Change military appraisals too," [Online News, Aug. 4] — if I take the time to commit myself to 20 plus years in the Air Force then I think my supervisor should spend as much time as needed to ensure I have an outstanding performance report written on me; especially if I have performed at a level above the normal. The check and mark system ... would make me feel as though my performance didn't make a whole lot of difference. We should keep the current rating system.

Chief Master Sgt. H. L. Williams
USAF, Retired

No. 13 not always unlucky

By Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Jim Finch

First things first: I am honored and humbled to have been selected by the chief of staff, General Michael E. Ryan, to serve as your 13th chief master sergeant of the Air Force. Some of you may look at the number 13 and worry about it being an unlucky one for me. Just to set the record straight, I consider myself extremely lucky. I have the good fortune to serve with and for the finest men and women in the greatest Air Force in the world.

I wanted to take a moment to mention a few things on my mind as I assume office. I hope these thoughts will be of interest to you and, where applicable, maybe even help you.

We are, as has been said many times this year, at the doorstep of the new millennium. This is also a time of tremendous change for the Air Force. But that shouldn't be cause for concern. On the contrary, it's a wonderful opportunity for all of us to step up and be a part of the evolution of the Expeditionary Aerospace Force.

Looking toward the EAF and our bright future should also encourage us to look back. We need to look at our heritage and

our history to help us see the way on our trek forward.

Ours is a proud heritage. From 1947 until today, the United States Air Force has been at the cutting edge. Whether it's air or space, we've continually led the way. We've done that, in large part, by recruiting our nation's very best people, through our world-class training and education programs, and through very hard work.

To continue this tradition of excellence, even in the face of today's high operation tempo, we all must constantly strive to improve. Our heritage tells us we were taught and given all of the tools we would ever need to be an effective enlisted corps at basic military training. Indeed, the roots of our core values are firmly entrenched there: integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do.

As a matter of course, we should all go back and dust off the foundation we were provided at BMT, especially when challenged by events of the day. And we should reinforce in ourselves — younger airmen, noncommissioned officers and



13th CMSAF
Jim Finch

senior NCOs — that which made us successful there.

Also, as we transition to the EAF, we should recommit ourselves to making sure our troops have the correct information concerning important issues and put an end to the "rumor-mill" method of passing on the word.

Our people are far too important for this kind of misinforming. We should never give them what we "think" are the right answers to their questions. All of us must take the time to get them

the facts on issues such as TRICARE, pay and benefits, and promotions and the assignment system, to name a few. After all, our first- and second-term airmen will use this information as they make decisions about re-enlisting and making the Air Force a career.

One last thing: I want to thank retired CMSAF Eric Benken, and all of the former chief master sergeants of the Air Force, for laying the foundation upon which I now begin to build. Without their leadership and contributions, I wonder where the enlisted corps would be today. I hope to do them proud in my service to you.



Aircraft respond twice to Iraqi fire

Twice in the last two days, Operation Northern Watch aircraft were shot at by Iraqi anti-aircraft artillery fire.

The most recent incident occurred between approximately 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., Iraqi time, Tuesday Aug. 10. Responding in self-defense, U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagles and F-16C Fighting Falcons dropped guided munitions on two separate communications facilities. Equipment at these facilities is used to relay information



from radars that in turn target coalition aircraft. The sites were to the north and northeast of the city of Mosul.

On Monday Aug. 9, U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagles and F-16C Fighting Falcons also responded in self-defense, dropping guided bombs on command and control sites north of Mosul.

Defense bill on the table

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for military members in January 2000 and a one time reform of the military pay tables effective July 1, 2000.

■ Setting annual military pay raises at one-half percent above the annual increases in the Employment Cost Index for fiscal years 2001 through 2006. This is significant because it will help narrow the gap that exists between private sector wage growth and military pay that is currently estimated at 13.5 percent.

■ Adding \$225 million to accelerate the transition to basic allowance for housing. This would reduce pocket expenses for military members living in high cost areas.

■ Retirement pay reform giving military members the option to choose between retiring under the pre-1986 retirement plan at 2.5 percent of basic pay per year of service over 20 years (up to a maximum of 75 percent) or remaining under the Redux retirement system and receiving a \$30,000 bonus.

■ Expanding the authority to pay Aviation Continuation Pay, "pilot bonus," to aviation officers in grades below O-7 through their 25th year of service. The provision also extends the \$25,000 maximum annual amount of the bonus to all contracts, regardless of length.

■ \$1.5 billion in increased funding for military readiness; the Air Force portion of this increase is \$648.2 million.

■ \$8.49 billion for military construction and family housing; including \$380 million for the construction of 2,100 family housing units, more than \$800 million for the construction of bachelor enlisted quarters and more than \$650 million for vital military construction projects for the Reserve.

■ Enhanced TRICARE dental benefit for retirees and an expanded dental program for dependents and Reservists.

■ A requirement for the Department of Defense to provide funeral honor details, with a minimum of two uniformed military members, one of which must represent the service of the deceased veteran, for honorably discharged veterans.

The bill also authorizes several increases for Air Force procurement, including \$1.6 billion for the F-22 Raptor, \$54 million for an additional 12 Joint Primary Air Training System aircraft, \$20 million for additional Predator unmanned aerial vehicles and multiple modifications for F-15 and F-16 fighters.

Additionally, the conference committee approved several increases for Air Force research and development, including \$112.3 million for B-2 bomber upgrades; \$30 million for alternate engine development for the Joint Strike Fighter; \$15.4 for B-52 radar upgrades and an increase of \$40 million for the Minuteman III Guidance Replacement Program.

Senator John Warner, R-Va., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee said "This year, House and Senate conferees confronted especially difficult challenges affecting our nation's security. Our armed forces are faced with a measurable decline in readiness, troublesome recruitment and retention problems, aging equipment, and newly emerging threats on the horizon.

"Our forces, while performing with great distinction in the recent conflict in Kosovo and in numerous other deployments around the world are simply over stretched. They are beginning to show the strains that come from overuse."

The senator added, "The resources authorized in this bill will allow us to begin rebuilding and modernizing our military forces while improving the quality of life for our service men and women and their families."

AF reassigns missileer in interest of good order

WASHINGTON (AFPN)— Calling it a matter of good order and discipline rather than accommodation of personal religious convictions, the Air Force is retraining and reassigning an intercontinental ballistic crew member who morally objects to working in the isolated confines of a missile silo with female crew members.

First Lt. Ryan Berry will leave his current position with the 91st Operations Support Squadron, Minot Air Force Base, N.D., for retraining as an acquisition officer before being reassigned to Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., in late September. The retraining is at Lieutenant Berry's request and in accordance with the needs of the Air Force.

According to Air Force officials, women have been assigned to Minuteman missile combat crews since 1986 and make up 15 percent of the missile combat force. The possibility of serving on a gender-integrated crew is covered for all students during training at Undergraduate Space and Missile Training, Vandenberg, AFB, Calif.

Shortly after arriving at Minot and with the backing of the base chaplain, the 26-year-old Roman Catholic approached his commander for religious accommodation saying he believed his convictions prohibited him from serving alone with female crew members on alert because it would present an "occasion of sin." The commander agreed to accommodate Lieutenant Berry's request for religious accommodation.

This decision was in consonance with Department of Defense policy to accommodate religious practices that will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards or discipline.

Fifteen months later, however, rising complaints of perceived favoritism from both male and female crew members compelled Air Force officials to end the accommodation. His chain of command decided Lieutenant Berry could no longer be accommodated. In addressing members of the 91st Space Wing, the commander, Col. Ronald J. Haeckel said, "Unfortunately, our past practice of accommodation has adversely affected good order, discipline and morale. ... That's why I made the decision to end the ... accommodation for Lt. Berry. We cannot afford the sustained negative impact on the morale of our folks."

This article is available in its entirety online.



TV spots continue

WASHINGTON (AFP)—Four television commercials touting Air Force opportunities are currently airing in major metropolitan markets across the country as the service continues its advertising campaign through the end of the fiscal year.

The ads, including one in Spanish, feature Air Force recruits and are part of the service's national advertising campaign. Major markets include New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. A \$37 million network campaign will begin in the fall with the new television network schedule.

The Air Force began purchasing national television advertising for the first time in its history earlier this year. In addition to the TV ads, the Air Force has also purchased advertising in movie theater chains nationwide.

The increased exposure is prompted by the difficulties all military services are reporting in today's recruitment marketplace. For the first time since 1979, the Air Force is not expected to meet its recruiting goals. The service's recruiting year runs concurrent with the federal fiscal year, October through September. To date, the Air Force is nearly 2,300 people short of its fiscal year goal of signing up 33,800 men and women to join the 350,000-plus people already wearing the Air Force uniform.

In previous years, the Air Force relied on non-paid television public service announcements to augment its national and local print advertising plans.

The television campaign followed the service's unprecedented enlistment bonus program in October with bonuses ranging up to \$12,000 targeting 115 qualifying career specialties.

Recruiting Service officials cite several factors including the strong economy, higher college enrollments and a declining propensity among America's youth to consider a military career, that make it a challenging time for military recruiters.

CSAF defines reconstitution

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some of their skills while they're gone. "When they're away, some of their skills atrophy. When you don't do some of your low-level training and when you're fixed into certain missions, you have to go back and re-broaden your force."

General Ryan said although readiness indicators for some units involved in OAF dropped as much as they did in Desert Storm — an average of 12 percentage points — he doesn't expect recovery to take as long. "We'll come back up faster this time," he said adding that it will take "about half a year for most of the units to recover."

We use reconstitution to say we're going to catch up on the training," he said. "We're going to let people rest a little bit — two weeks down when they come home. Then back into training — crawl, walk then run to regain those skills they'll need for the next time we're called."

General Ryan added that he hopes the Air Force's next heavy tasking happens after Oct. 1 when the Expeditionary Aerospace Force concept becomes reality.

The AEF, according to General Ryan, plays a major role in the rest and recuperation of the force and couldn't come at a better time.

"We were fortunate that we went through the description, design and foundation of the AEF [Aerospace Expeditionary Force] structure," he said. "If we hadn't had AEF, we would not have a template to recover to."

General Ryan and Air Force Secretary Whit Peters have testified on Capitol Hill about how the AEF is expected to restore stability and predictability to a heavily tasked aerospace force.

By blending fighter, bomber and refueling assets together to form rotating, on-call units for 15 months at a time, the concept is going to allow units to work on a schedule that provides training while preparing for real-world situations.

Using the AEF as the platform by which to recover, General Ryan said, "We are going to execute it [EAF] except for those units that were stressed and are in a recovery period. That tells us where the holes are."

In the meantime, General Ryan said that, while the force may be weary, it is not worn out.

"We have another force that did not deploy during this timeframe, and they're very, very ready to go," he said. "We could reconstitute the force and send them again now if we needed to, but we'd rather do it in a very precise, measured way to bring them back up to their training levels."

Air Force releases F-16 accident report

Wet weather played a major role in the F-16 mishap that occurred on landing at Kimhae International Airport, Republic of Korea, about 7:30 p.m. March 18, according to an accident investigation board.

The aircraft and pilot were from the 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan Air Base, Korea.

Based on evidence obtained during the investigation, the board president issued an opinion that the cause of the mishap was the lack of braking action of Kimhae's wet runway, combined with hydroplaning from standing water on the runway. Weather, errors in the pilot's judgment and supervision were deemed to be contributing factors.

The pilot safely exited the aircraft without injury.

The aircraft suffered moderate damage to its underside. The majority of the damage consisted of a destroyed electronic countermeasures pod, foreign object damage to the engine and destroyed landing gear. (Courtesy of Pacific Air Forces News Service)



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